

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7816

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 1576

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JA, KS

SUBJECT: JAPAN POSTAL WORKERS' WISH TO RENEW TIES TO
SOUTH KOREAN COUNTERPART

1. SUMMARY. IN FURTHERANCE FRATERNAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ZENTEI (JAPAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION) AND SOUTH KOREAN POSTAL WORKERS, ZENTAI OFFICIAL STATED HIS UNION WANTED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO KOREA BUT WAS APPREHENSIVE HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GET OUT AGAIN. EMBASSY DECLINED UNION'S REQUEST THAT USG HELP ASSURE SAFETY OF SUCH AN EMISSARY. ACTION REQUESTED: DOES DEPARTMENT AND SEOUL HAVE GUIDANCE WHETHER CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THESE UNIONS IS IN US INTEREST AND IF SO WHAT INFORMATION WE MIGHT PASS ON TO ZENTAI RE DEVELOPING ITS TIES WITH KOREAN COUNTERPART. END SUMMARY.

2. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION RE ZENTEI (POSTAL WORKERS, MEMBERSHIP 203,000), PTTI AND SOHYO ACTIVITY WITH OTHER ASIAN LABOR MOVEMENTS, ZENTEI POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT CHIEF AND CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER, SADA O KUROSAWA, TOLD EMBOFF THAT ZENTEI WOULD LIKE TO SEND UNION OFFICIAL TO SOUTH KOREAN TO MEET WITH KOREAN POSTAL WORKERS' UNION (ANOTHER PTTI AFFILIATE), BUT IS FEARFUL EMISSARY MIGHT BE IN PERSONAL DANGER. ZENTEI BELIEVES GOJ THROUGH SEOUL EMBASSY OBVIOUSLY CANNOT "GUARANTEE" SAFE RETURN OF ZENTEI EMISSARY, BUT
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ASKED IF USG COULD ARRANGE AN ASSURANCE THAT ZENTEI REPRE-

SENTIATIVE WOULD RETURN SAFELY TO JAPAN. EMBOFF TOLD KUROSAWA THAT USG NOT ABLE TO GUARANTEE SAFETY OF EVEN ITS OWN CITIZENS IF THEY CHOOSE TO ENGAGE IN WHAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN FOREIGN COUNTRY.

3. ZENTEI FORERLY HAD ACTIVE RELATIONS WITH KOREAN COUNTER-PART. THESE CONTACT ENDED TWO YEARS AGO WHEN KOREAN POSTAL WORKERS OFFICIAL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OVERSEAS UNION BUSINESS TRIP TO FLEE TO US. KOREAN GOVERNMENT NOW WILL LET NO POSTAL WORKERS' UNION REPRESENTATIVE OUT OF KOREA AND ZENTEI NO DOUBT FEARS ITS SOHYO TIES TAG IT RED IN KOREAN GOVERNMENT EYES.

4. INTEREST IN RENEWING KOREAN CONNECTION PART OF WIDER JAPAN PTTI AFFILIATES' INITIATIVE WITHIN SOHYO TO MOVE INTERNATIONAL EMPHASIS AWAY FROM SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN BLOC TOWARD FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN ASIA TO BE REPORTED SEPTTEL.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD LIKE AMEMBASSY SEOUL AND DEPARTMENT THOUGHTS AND GUIDANCE ON THIS MATTER. SPECIFICALLY, (A) IF TOPIC SHOULD BE RAISED AGAIN BY ZENTEI OR OTHER SOHYO AFFILITATE OR (B) AT OUR DISCRETION WITH ZENTEI, WOULD IT BE PROPER FOR EMBASSY TO OFFER TO PASS SIMPLE MESSAGE TO KOREAN POSTAL WORKERS' OFFICIAL (OR OTHER KOREAN UNIONS) THROUGH AMEMBASSY SEOUL LABOR ATTACHE. EMBASSY BELIEVES ZENTEI (AND OTHER SOHYO AFFILITATES) CAN PASS MESSAGES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIAT CHANNELS OR ICFTU, BUT BELIEVES IT DESIRES TO KEEP EXCHANGE AS PRIVATE AS POSSIBLE.

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